

# the garden

-a monthly newsletter for moms who desire to blossom in their roles of being a mom, wife, and woman-

“For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.” Isaiah 61:11



## Sowing the ‘Seed of the Word’ in our Daily Lives...

Practical, Biblical Encouragement for Moms

As we enter April, I think it’s fair to say we all welcome the change that spring brings: color and warmer weather. It’s finally here! In general, though, the mere thought of “change” in our life can flood us with anxiety and stress. Why is that? Many of us really are “creatures of habit” who become very comfortable where we “are”, in all areas of our life. -Where we live, work, go to church, who we spend time with, how we do things, what we eat, what music we listen to, even where we sit in church, and so on. If anything rocks the “status quo”, we can find ourselves out of our comfort zone, unsure of ourselves, and desperate to do what we can to keep things as they are, whether it’s best for us or not. At least it will be comfortable, right? I know

these feelings well; I bet you do too. Have you ever faced the idea of change and wanted to run in the other direction? I have. I’ve

*For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11*



learned along the journey though, that if we truly want to live out the life God has planned and prepared for us, then we need to trust Him through faith when we feel Him directing us on a new leg of the journey. I can think of a number of big changes in my life that could

have been completely stressful and down right scary if I wasn’t leaning on God. -And all the missed opportunities there would have been if change didn’t happen. For example, one of the biggest changes in my and our family’s life was our move to Arizona. We both felt a “tug” from God to move out west to the beautiful place I fell in love with as a teen on a family trip. God had plans for us out there, and He had planted the seed in my mind that began to grow into a dream that begged within me to blossom into a reality. We did make the BIG move into the basically “unknown” as we packed up and took off across country with our belongings, leaving our loving family far behind. The morning of the move, the enormity of this change loomed over me and the tears flowed. God is so Continued on pg. 2

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Moms in Bloom strives to help equip moms to grow in the Lord & blossom where we’re planted. We believe that mothering is one of the most important jobs there is, and through support of each other, God’s Word and a relationship with Him, we can better fulfill that role... and enjoy the journey together!

We hope this e-newsletter is a blessing to you, & we desire to reach more moms with encouragement & hope. Please forward these on to moms you know, & they can receive them directly each month by emailing Wendy (above). Pass it on!



## This Month’s “Pick” ...Health Tip: “Superfoods”

To be all we need to be as moms, we need to take time for us/our bodies

To achieve optimal health, help prevent debilitating disease, and feel our best, we need to focus on eating foods that pack a nutritional punch! A great diet includes foods from all the food groups in the right balance (while avoiding trans fats and high fructose corn syrup), healthy portion sizes, moderation, and lots of fruits and veggies in a variety of colors; the deeper color the better. “Superfoods” offer the most nutrition per bite. We should do what we can to include these foods in our diet as much as possible. Some of them include: apples, avocados, beans, berries, blueberries, broccoli, cabbage, cherries, cranberries and cranberry juice, dark chocolate, eggs, flax seed, garlic, green tea, kale, kiwi fruit, oats, olive oil, onions, red grapes, salmon, spinach, tomatoes (especially cooked, like spaghetti sauce), walnuts, whole grains, and yogurt. They each offer our bodies incredible health benefits and taste, so they should be staples in our diet from which we build on. For personalized diet plans, proper portion sizes, sample meal plans, and more, visit: [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov). -WL, R.D.

## Sowing the 'Seed of the Word' in our Daily Lives ... cont'd from page 1

good though, as those were the last tears I shed over it. I pursued over "the hump" and we pushed on as we felt God lead us, and the blessings followed. Yes, we had moved to a beautiful place with sunny blue skies, mountains, saguaros, and palm trees, but the real blessings went deeper than that. God had a plan for us and I now see that He led us out into the desert to strengthen our faith and grow us in Him. We weren't alone though. He brought lots of strong Christians into our lives, we got involved with church for the first time, He drew me to a large Christian moms' group when I first became a mom, and it was in Arizona that I stepped way out of my comfort zone and led my first Bible study (of 35 women!) through our large church. God worked through those experiences and others out there to shape us into what He needed us to be to fulfill His purpose for us. For some, they might look at change like a thorny cactus... "Ouch!" Or "Keep away!", but what I see are the beautiful cactus flowers they produce in the spring, like the many blessings that can flow through to us when we step out in faith in God-directed change. How do we know if it's God-directed?

Through prayer. Talk to God and sincerely ask Him to "open and close doors" according to His good and perfect Will. He will give us signs to

**Don't allow the "thorns" of change to steal blessings from you!**



*"God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28*

guide our steps, we just need to be looking for them and seeking His Will. We may think we know what's best, but truly we don't, apart from

Him. He sees and knows the "big picture" of our lives, we just need to trust Him and follow His lead.

Through change we grow and fulfill our purpose for being here. I have learned that if it's God's plan, it's a good plan, and we should not fear it. Like when Tom lost his job in Arizona. It wasn't the end of the world... it was the beginning of him building his own graphic design business from home. And like when we recently felt led to move on to a new church, River Hills Christian Church, it was a tough decision, but we see confirmation in God's beautiful plan that is unfolding for us there. That decision was extra hard: it involved relationships and emotions. But ultimately, when faced with the urging inside us to make a move, we must answer this question: Who are we going to follow: man or God? That question always clears through the clouds of confusion for me. If you truly feel God tugging on you to make a change, don't panic. Just give Him your open mind, knowing in your heart that He won't lead you wrong. Trust God over your emotions. Then take that step of faith, as He directs you. The blessings of fulfilling His plan for your life will follow. -WL



### Kitchen Connection ...Sharing Recipes Our Families Love

Got a recipe you're glad to have?? Don't keep it a secret... email it to Wendy at [wendy@momsinbloom.com](mailto:wendy@momsinbloom.com) !

#### Yogurt Fruit Granola Treat -Wendy's kitchen (Morrow, OH)

To encourage bone health, here's one of my favorite healthy snacks.

This is so sweet and refreshing... you feel like you've had a dessert!

Fat free or low fat, plain yogurt (avoid vanilla: it's high in sugar)

Granola with almonds and/or cashews

Fruit of your choice: fresh fruit like strawberries, sweet peaches, blueberries, raspberries, etc. or canned fruit in it's own juice like pineapple and peaches. Choose your favorites... either one or mix some together.

Simply put yogurt in bowl and mix in your fruit of choice. Then top with granola. For a fun and festive presentation, put these in layers in parfait glasses or cups. This is a great snack for the whole family.

#### Taco Salad- from Michele's kitchen (Phoenix, AZ)

As the weather warms up, this is a delicious and easy recipe. It's one of Wendy's family's favorite meals.

Lettuce, chopped

Tomato, chopped

Tortilla chips, crumbled up

Taco nacho or cheddar cheese, shredded

Meat, beef or soy "burger" crumbles, (like "Morningstar" brand, in a bag in the freezer section with breakfast foods, you just heat it up in a pan)

Honey French Salad Dressing

Cook meat . Place some tortilla chip crumbles on each plate, then layer with lettuce, tomato, meat, and cheese. Top with dressing, and enjoy!

### Craft Corner ...Seasonal Craft Idea: "Pebble Magnets" - Stacey Berg

#### Supplies You Will Need:

E6000 glue

Scrapbook paper (patterned paper)

Small magnets (hefty enough to hold papers)

Glass pebbles

Metal tins (optional; make a nice gift)



#### Directions:

1. Cut the patterned paper to the size of the glass pebble.

2. Place a dot of the glue in the center of

Here's a fun craft and way to dress up your refrigerator for spring. Make beautiful magnets with any pattern you desire by choosing from many choices at a craft store near you in the scrapbook paper section.

the paper on the patterned side.

3. Press the flat side of the pebble down on top of the paper; let the glue ooze to the outer edges of the cut circle of paper.

4. Place a dot of glue onto the magnet and press to the backside of your pebble. Let dry before you put your magnet onto a magnetic surface.

5. You can then place your magnets into a metal tin. Decorate the tin with decorative tape, paper, buttons, or anything else!

Enjoy yourself and/or give as a gift!



## Nourishment for the 'Soil' ...Sharing the Fruit of God's Work in our Lives

*"the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." Luke 8:15*

### God Always Answers, Do You Believe?

Since the passing of my son, Myles Alexander, there are days that even my faith seems short. I miss him, my heart aches, and I wonder how I will live the rest of my life with this void in my heart. It's during this time that I cry out to God for something to hold onto. I have learned that He always answers, if we only believe. After Myles' funeral, everyone went back to their lives, and I was told to stay home to recover physically. My husband immersed himself in his work. I sat at home and listened to the silence. This was the hardest time of my life. Sitting beside Myles' bed in the NICU, I remembered telling my son that if this life was too hard, I understood. I would miss him every day for the rest of my life, but he could go and live in Heaven until I joined him. One day, I was crying out to God for reassurance that he is okay. As I prayed from downstairs, I heard the toys in the room we decorated for him begin to play. I remember standing in disbelief and heading for his room. Sure enough, the toys were playing and no one was there. I cried and thanked God for the sign. Then one evening I again asked God for a sign that Myles was doing fine. I dreamt this dream: A little boy, about 2 years old, was running through Heaven without a stitch of clothing on. Two angels busily chased him, giggling. He ran up to Noah and asked him ques-

*"When I pray, You answer me; You encourage me by giving me the strength I need." Psalm 138:3 NLT*

tions rapidly, "Did the ark stink? How did you get all those animals to behave?" and on. Then he ran up to Jonah. "What did it smell like in the belly of that whale? Why didn't you just listen to God? Did you eat anything while you were in there?" I noticed the people in Heaven laughing, yet a little annoyed at his ornery behavior. Then I saw Jesus sitting next to God. He said, "Father, are you sure you brought him home at the right time? He's causing a bit of trouble and perhaps if he stayed on Earth longer he would fit in better." Just then, the little boy jumped into God's lap. He laid himself in God's arms and wrapped one hand up in His beard. He began to suck his other thumb and quickly went to sleep within the loving arms of his Heavenly Father. God, looking down on this little boy smiled, and said, "Yes, I am sure, now is the perfect time." Throughout the years this dream has repeated during nights my heart aches most. Each time, the exact same events bring a smile to my face as I can depict that same ornery preemie that held his breath to annoy the nurses. But how could this blond haired, blue eyed boy be my son? My husband and I both have very dark hair and my eyes are dark. Now Myles has a younger sister, Clara and brother, Gabriel. They both were the exact image of Myles when born. Astonishingly, they both have blond hair and blue eyes! God always answers our prayers! Do you believe when you ask that He will answer? -Janel Hemrick, Ohio

## Babes in Bloom ...Moms Aren't the Only Ones Blooming!

Moms share fun things to do, parenting tips, funny things they said, teachable moments, etc.



### Need a little humor right about now??

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5 and Ryan 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'" Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

Do your kids say funny things sometimes? I know mine do. I love how they can so innocently say something that can cause a room full of adults to erupt with laughter... to the point of tears even! It's those moments that I love to record for them so they can enjoy a good chuckle later on in life when they can appreciate the humor of it. If you haven't already, start a little journal or notebook of the cute and funny things they say. You'll be SO glad you did! -WL



## Calling on God ...the Powerful Prayer of a Woman, Wife, Mother

Don't miss the opportunity to connect with God daily. Tap into His power in your lives!

### For yourself:

Lord, Thank You for all the beautiful changes taking place outside right now. Thank You for the beauty You are sending our way. Father, I know change can bring wonderful things in my life, but it can be scary to face the unknown. Please help me find the strength from You to embrace the changes and plans You have for my life and not be afraid. Amen.

### For your husband (if applicable):

Lord, I also pray the same prayer for my husband. He too faces changes in his daily life. He deals with changes all the time at work that I may not even know about. Please equip Him with what he needs to face these unafraid with strength and courage. Help him truly seek Your way and trust You in every area of his life. Also, please continue to draw us closer together and grow our love and unity. Amen.

### For your child/children:

Lord, Thank You for my child/children. They are growing up so quickly. People always say that, but it really is true. Help me be the mom they need as they grow and change throughout their life. Give me intuition and Your wisdom to do what's necessary to lay a solid foundation in them now so they will be firmly rooted in who they are in You so they will make good choices and follow You. Amen.

## How Does Your Garden Grow?... Have a Garden? Share it & Your Story Here!

What does your garden or flowers mean to you and your family? What are your insights?

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, my red winged blackbird friends returned to our pond, and the mourning dove called her solemn “whooh, whooh.” Despite the 12 inches of snow that fell on March 8<sup>th</sup>, we believe that spring is near. The changing of the clocks to lengthen our evening light seemed to usher in warmth, and the sun today already began a fast melt of the frozen landscape.

As the winter draws closer to its end, we long for spring amid the gray skies and rain, amid the bad news of the day, wars and injustices and tragedies. The human spirit sustains itself with hope.

As the sun rises each morning, it warms the dark branches of the trees, producing a glow of yellow-pink, an aura around those bare brown arms that reminds us of the buds to come. As we step outside into the frosty air, bird songs capture our attention after the silence of the winter. Many species of birds have begun to return from their winter homes, arriving ahead of the warmer weather, here to greet it, to wait and watch and sing out for its coming.

What do they know of hope? They carry it on their wings! I breathe deeply, and enjoy my Easter lily’s luscious scent as I await the season of growth!

-Donna Maile, Co-owner of Greenfield Plant Farm, [www.greenfieldplantfarm.com](http://www.greenfieldplantfarm.com)



### April’s Featured “Garden”...

Donna Maile’s: Greenfield Nursery  
(Maineville & Anderson locations)



## Family Traditions... “The Hand Prayer” -A Tool to Remember Who to Pray For

Share your family’s traditions that create memories and pass down important values here.

Need a hand (or paw) remembering to pray for all the people you want to? Here’s help... for you & your children.

1. Your thumb is nearest you. So begin praying for others by praying for those closest to you. They are easiest to remember.
2. The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal: teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need wisdom in pointing others in the right direction.
3. Our tallest finger reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administra-

tors. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion.

4. Surprisingly, our ring finger is the weakest finger, as any piano teacher will testify. It can remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need our prayers day and night.
5. Our little finger reminds us where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.



## The “Other” Hand Prayer... A Tool For Effective Prayer

Prayers aren’t “all about us.” When we pray, we should start by focusing on our awesome God by praising Him for how *amazing* He is. As the thumb touches all four fingers, so praise should permeate our whole prayer life. Then we should follow with Thanksgiving, Intercession & Petition (use hand prayer above here), and then Confession. This is a great tool for a great prayer life.

-Diagram from “The Navigators.”



## A Tip For You... “Zwaggle”

Share a Tip That Makes Life Easier!



**zwaggle** do your share.

Are you looking for a way to save money, pass on your gently used children’s items and get the items they need, and recycle for the environment -all at the same time? Sounds like you need to Zwaggle! If you haven’t heard about it yet, “Zwaggle” is a national online network of parents who come together to share. It works like Ebay, but does not deal with money. You receive Zwaggle points (or Zoints) by giving your gently used things to other families, then use those Zoints to obtain “new” things for your family. Items can either be picked up or the recipient pays the shipping cost. Check out [www.zwaggle.com](http://www.zwaggle.com) for all the details. -Amy Leist

\*\*\*Have a great tip? Email it to Wendy for the May issue!\*\*\*